



News Release
May 9, 2022

STEWART-HAUGE ANNEXATION

Attached is an executive summary and frequently asked questions document with regard to the Stewart-Hauge Annexation of lands into the City of Eau Claire from the Town of Washington.

Should you have additional questions, contact Deputy City Manager/City Engineer Dave Solberg at 715-839-4934 or Dave.Solberg@EauClaireWI.gov.

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Stewart-Hauge Annexation Petition

FAQs

Will new houses in the annexation be connected to water and sewer?

Yes, all new homes will be connected to City water and sewer systems.

Does the topography of the Stuart and Hoage land support housing development? Are there floodplain issues or other environmental issues with developing this land?

Areas of the development are hilly similar to Oakwood Hills. There are minor floodplain areas in the Hauge lands. There are identified environmentally sensitive areas on the Stewart lands and the developer has indicated interest in preserving these areas as greenways. None of these topographical issues pose a substantial difficulty to the compact, sustainable, residential development of this property in the City.

Does the Town of Washington have any say in this? Either the board or the residents?

In Wisconsin, annexation is driven by landowners' determination of which jurisdiction they prefer to be in, and villages and cities decide whether or not to accept annexations. The Town of Washington would retain the rest of its tax base and jurisdictional integrity. The annexation represents about 1.3% of the Town of Washington's land. Action by the Town of Washington is not required.

What criteria do we look at when annexing land to the city? Are there legal items we should look at?

The City looks at the ability to effectively and efficiently provide services. Consistency with the City's approved plans, such as the Comprehensive Plan are also considered. There are limited areas within the County that can be served by City services and thus develop sustainably. The areas adjacent to the City's boundary are suitable for sustainable development, and when owners of these properties decide to annex, the City usually agrees to annex them. Annexation is the best chance to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, including providing diverse, well-built, sustainable needed housing opportunities.

If we annex, does the City have resources to support the large annexation?

Eau Claire is a growing community, and we have a recognized need for additional housing, and this new development allows for this growth to occur with sufficient municipal services. This type of growth provides additional tax revenue to allow the City to adjust services to meet the new growth. Without an annexation, growth in large rural lots requires more expensive municipal service delivery.

What is the tax impact?

At full build out, the approximate new growth could be between \$600 to \$700 million in a five- to ten-year period. At a mill rate of \$17 per thousand, that results in \$10.5 million per year in property tax revenue potentially, with approximately 40 percent allocated to the City, or \$4 million/year. This is a net positive for the City, County, ECASD and CVTC in terms of tax revenue relative to cost of new services. With five-acre lot development, in contrast, this would generate \$45 million in new growth which would be only about \$625K/year in new tax revenue.

I looked up "smart growth" and it talks about neighborhoods that are close to city services and pedestrian/bike friendly This land south of LCP seems a bit far out to city services so can someone help me understand how this is "smart growth".

All new areas of growth can appear to be on the fringe when they are initially developed, and it takes a while before it begins to look at feel like a city neighborhood. When initially planned and constructed, for example, Putnam Heights would have appeared to be detached from the Third Ward or Randall Park, however, now we consider it to be a key part of Eau Claire. Similarly, Princeton Valley or Jeffers Park neighborhoods are still newer neighborhoods. The key is to plan effectively for smart and sustainable growth. This was done in the large neighborhood annexations of the past, and that is why the neighborhoods are seamless within the city. This annexation would be just to the west of Kyes Park, a City-owned greenspace. It's also in close proximity to Eau Claire County's resource of Lowes Creek County Park. Regarding transit, we are working to determine the best way to serve the new neighborhoods. Residential developments exist along the STH 53 & 93 corridors, with additional occurring in the Town Hall Road area. As urban residential growth in this area continues, there may be route adjustments for commuters in the future. While route adjustments become a possibility in an urban development, transit service is not able to be supported by a low-density rural development. So too will City streets and trails adjust in time. Jeffers Road had been a rural road, but is now being reconstructed as a City street with a pedestrian and bike trail.

What is the proposed land use for this annexation?

The proposed private land use after annexation is residential. The county park would remain public parkland, and its use and operation will remain controlled by Eau Claire County.

Are the property owners mandated to use city water and sewer? I think the concern is that this land will get annexed and they will still choose to use wells and septic tanks.

Yes, per City ordinance property owners within the corporate limits of the City of Eau Claire are required to use City water and sewer utilities.

Will LCP continue to be a County park or will it become a City park? Any changes to user groups of the park such as CORBA? Will running water and flush toilets be added to the park if annexed?

Lowes Creek County Park will continue to be a County park. There are not anticipated to be any changes to the user groups of the park. A good comparison is the use of the City's Northwest Community Park. No change to park operations or use has occurred as the area around the park has developed over the past several years. Running water and sanitary service would be available to the park if the County chooses to install water fountains and flush toilets. Without an annexation it would not be possible for this.

Water and waste water service is provided by a DNR-regulated utility. Does this mean that all development is planned to be connected to both city water and sewer? I have heard folks say that this development will be connected to city water but not sewer, and rather be connected to residential septic systems.

Yes, this means that all development planned will be connected to both city water and sewer; residential septic systems will not be allowed.

Executive Summary, 5/9/2022

Annexation Basics

- Property owners request annexation to a City or Village. The City or Village does not initiate an annexation.
- The property owners determine and submit the map of the area they are requesting to annex.
- Annexations must be contiguous to the City or Village they are requesting to join.
- Annexations by statute do not require public hearings and have not held public hearings for Eau Claire.
- The City Council is the only elected body that votes on annexation approval. The County or Township elected bodies do not vote on annexation.
- Annexations allow the connection to City/Village utilities thus facilitating compact, environmentally responsible development.
- The Town of Washington would receive 5 years of tax income from the annexation area to ease the transition from township to city.

Sustainable Growth / Environmentally Responsible Basics: City growth is sustainable, compact growth. Large lot, uncontrolled rural subdivisions are urban sprawl. Sustainable growth benefits the entire community...rural, urban, and suburban areas all benefit. Smart growth allows anywhere from 4x to 15x the number of residential units in the same area as rural "urban sprawl" growth, while still providing public greenways and trails.

Sustainable growth provides the following benefits:

- Reduces urban sprawl: Smart growth reduces pressure to continue to convert rural/agricultural land to residential by reducing urban sprawl pressure.
- Eliminates septic systems and wells: Water and waste water service is provided by a DNR-regulated utility.
- Reduces carbon footprint: More compact growth closer to jobs and commerce reduces travel distances and access to public transit.
- Creates more housing to relieve demand for housing: New housing addresses the Chippewa Valley's urgent need for ALL types of housing. This kind of growth makes residential units for all income levels more affordable and accessible to all members of the community and creates inclusive neighborhoods.
- Adds to tax base: The growth allows for significantly more tax base to be created for multiple entities including CVTC, Eau Claire County and the Eau Claire Area School District.

Infrastructure Support

- The City's Comprehensive Plan, and also the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's Sewer Service Area Plan, acknowledges and plans for expansion of City's utilities to accommodate smart growth. The SSA boundary is a boundary that was established based on estimated growth but is able to be amended as needed to meet actual need. The SSA plan is routinely amended in association with development.
- The City has planned, and budgeted, for utility trunk line expansion in newly annexed areas. The previous City Councils have approved this funding through the budget process.
- The most recent utility trunk extension example was extending utilities in conjunction with the Fleet Farm development. This extension helped facilitate the continued smart, compact growth occurring on Lorch Avenue currently.
- All utilities and infrastructure in newly annexed and constructed developments are paid for by developers.